

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

processing hardware;

an operating system executable on the processing hardware; and

a storage management system executable on the processing hardware, the storage management system comprising one or more storage management components, wherein the storage management system is configured to provide one or more virtual storage devices for use by the operating system, and wherein a set of storage commands supported by the storage management system for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with the storage management components.

22. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 further comprising an application configured to execute with the operating system, wherein the application is configured to cause the additional commands to be used to communicate between the application and the storage management components.

23. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the virtual storage devices are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

24. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 23 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

25. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management

components include a file system.

26. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

27. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

28. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.

29. (Original) A computer accessible medium comprising instructions forming one or more storage management components, wherein the instructions, when executed, provide one or more virtual storage devices for use by an operating system, and wherein a set of storage commands supported for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with the storage management components.

30. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the virtual storage devices are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

31. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 30 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

32. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a file system.

33. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

34. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

35. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.

36-43 (Cancelled)

44. (Original) A method comprising providing one or more virtual storage devices for use by an operating system, wherein a set of storage commands supported for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with storage management components in a storage management system.

45. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the virtual storage devices are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

46. (Original) The method as recited in claim 45 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

47. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a file system.

48. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

49. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

50. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.